

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are all the claims pending in the present application. The Examiner has withdrawn the previous rejections, however the Examiner now applies a new reference to support the rejections of the pending claims. Specifically, claims 1-6 and 8-10¹ are now rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Owen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,841,099) and Konig (U.S. Patent No. 3,632,398) and further in view of Hino (U.S. Patent No. 6,037,103). Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Owen, Konig, and Hino, and further in view of Kurosawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,373,026).

§ 103(a) Rejections (Owen/Konig/Hino) - Claims 1-6 and 8-10

Applicants previously argued that Owen does not disclose or suggest at least, “hardening said insulating layer by applying a laser beam at a lower energy density than said predetermined energy density of the processing step around a processed portion processed in the processing step,” as recited in claim 1. In the present Office Action, the Examiner applies a new reference, Konig, to allegedly satisfy the above quoted feature. In response, Applicants submit that even if, *arguendo*, Konig discloses a laser process for hardening and smoothing plastic materials, there is no teaching or suggestion of the specific feature of “hardening an insulating layer by applying a laser beam at a lower energy density than said predetermined energy density of the processing step around a processed portion processed in the processing step,” as recited in claim 1 (emphasis added). That is, the specific underlying feature is not disclosed or suggested by either

¹ The Examiner actually indicated on page 2 of the Office Action that claims 1-10 are rejected over Owen, Konig, and Hino, however it appears that this was in error. It appears that the Examiner meant to indicate that claims 1-6 and 8-10 are rejected over Owen, Konig, and Hino.

of the applied references, including Konig. Therefore, at least based on the foregoing, Applicants submit that the applied references, either alone or in combination, do not satisfy the features of claim 1.

Applicants submit that independent claim 6 is patentable at least based on reasons similar to those set forth above with respect to claim 1.

Applicants submit that dependent claims 2-5 and 8-10 are patentable at least by virtue of their respective dependencies from independent claims 1 and 6.

Further, with respect to dependent claim 5, Applicants maintain our previous arguments with respect to this claim. That is, Applicants previously argued that the Examiner has not established a prima facie case that the features set forth in claim 5 are disclosed in Owen or would have been known to one of ordinary skill in the art. Owen does not disclose the features set forth in claim 5, and the Examiner's conclusory statement is not sufficient to prove that Owen satisfies the features set forth in claim 5. The Examiner has still not addressed these issues. Therefore, at least based on the foregoing, Applicants maintain that claim 5 is patentably distinguishable over the applied references.

Yet further, with respect to dependent claims 8-10, Applicants submit that the Examiner does not even address the features of these claims in the Office Action.

§ 103(a) Rejections (Owen/Hino/Konig/Kurosawa) - Claim 7

Applicants submit that claim 7 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency from independent claim 1. Kurosawa does not make up for the deficiencies of the other cited references.

RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111

U.S. Application No.: 10/500,253

Attorney Docket No.: Q81941

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.


Respectfully submitted,

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